A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND MEDICINAL BENEFITS AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HERBAL LIQUORS OF PALGHAR DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION:

Tribal communities reside in close proximity to nature. Nature is the most important factor in tribal life as it has been has been one of the most prominent sources of their livelihood since unknown times. In the initial stages of human groupings, the members survived collecting roots, fruits and hunting animals. Later through the development of crafts and tools making they learnt the art of agricultural production, and animal husbandry. All those various means of subsistence became their traditional means of survival. Those survival techniques were handed down from one generation to another which subsequently improved the technology of cultivation as well as domesticating animals for various purposes like ploughing; sowing, harvesting and the animals were used for helping the humans in farming and hunting. As the system of agriculture and animal husbandry developed and started producing sufficient amount of food resources, the population of human groups increased. In order to maintain the human groups intact and keep them in harmonious relations, the culture and value systems were introduced. However, their customs, rituals, institutions, celebrations and ceremonies show connectedness to the all-encompassing nature. Nature is God for them. They respect the natural world and show their respect through worships. Tribal communities have various indigenous gods and supernatural forces which they believe to be controlling not only the human lives but also all the natural objects. They worship mountains, rivers, trees, animals, food grains etc. for the purpose of bringing sense of security and consistent production and availability of food. As per their custom they observe the rituals of sacrifice. Almost in all the cultures across world sacrifice is a popular act. Tribal communities offer vegetables, fruits and animals to gods as the material of sacrifice with the purpose to please gods. Along with other natural products, liquor seems to be an integral part of their religious life. It is used in almost all sorts of worships, rituals and cultural practices. Use of liquor in tribal social and cultural life has many significances including health and nutrition's, commerce and economic welfare.

There is a debate on the issue of alcoholism in tribal life, but liquor carries immense social, cultural and commercial importance. There are misconceptions about the role played by liquor in tribal lifestyle; for many it is the chief reason for their underdevelopment and poverty. Unfortunately, their traditional herbal liquor is confused with the harmful alcoholic beverages. The positive prospects of herbal liquor have been ignored by researchers. It just does not benefit as a tool for organising social and cultural gatherings but also as a healthy herbal medicine. The herbal liquors possess nutritional elements that can benefit the human body for growth and healthy lifestyle. The herbal liquors can be a valuable option to illicit as well as foreign liquors that make harmful effects on the mind and body. On the other hand herbal liquors are cheaper than foreign liquors and easily available as they can be extracted from fruits and stems of trees. By consuming herbal liquors, tribal community members can save money which they can invest on other household works. The production of herbal liquors has been undertaken by tribal community members for centuries but they have not been able to encash its commercial value. There is a great opportunity in the field of tourism and entrepreneurship development in a tribal area. Herbal liquor is a less investigated area in terms of its various benefits to a human society. The proposed research study will be highlighting the issues of socio-economic and medicinal benefits of traditional herbal liquors produced by indigenous peoples of Palghar District.

Survey Review of Research and Development in the field:

There is a considerable contemplation over the issues regarding liquor in western countries. In India, liquor has been understood in terms of social problems as it has been a major cause of domestic violence and poverty among downtrodden classes. There are very few states and districts where complete ban on liquors is observed through enforcement of law. In India Gujrat, Bihar are the only states and districts like Chandrapur and Wardha in Maharashtra are known for complete restriction over liquor consumptions. Unfortunately the picture is quiet different and we often read the news of deaths due to consumption of illicit liquor in banned areas. It is a fact that the

government and non-government machinery have not provided sufficient attention to the home grown herbal liquors. There has been a very few researchers and writers that have touched the issues related to herbal liquors. According to Marathi Vishwakosh Vol.12, liquor has been defined as a drink that contains element of ethyl alcohol. In India, liquor is known by the name of 'Madya', 'Madyapeya', 'Daru', 'Madira', etc. In Rugveda Somvalli has been known to be a goddess who had an intoxicant influence. During Buddha period, consumption of liquor was allowed to only the ill persons. Due to abandonment the business of fermenting liquor remain ignored profession during those days. In Samajvidnyankosh it is claimed that alcoholic drinks were mainly used for the medicinal purposes its main function was to make a person dizzy or to make him sleep. It also was effective in removing pain.

In the article, 'Drinking Patterns of Hazardous Drinkers A Multicenter Study in India' published in book *Moonshine Markets: Issues in Unrecorded Alcohol Beverage Production and Consumption* Alan Haworth, & Ronald Simpson (Eds.). (2004).It is described that there is a historical association of alcohol to Indian civilization. The writers have referred to the Hindu religious texts and epic poetry that mention soma and sura as the popular drinks among various classes of society. They have further talked about social norms that regularised the drinking patterns among the members of different Varnas. The article also talks about different types of alcohol beverages like Commercial Beverages,Non Commercial Beverages; Traditional and Illicit alcohol.The book authored by Magandeep Singh, *THE INDIAN SPIRIT:The Untold Story of Alcohol in India* talks about the medicinal properties of alcohol. He refers to Charak Samhitas detailed description of alcohol. In order to balance various fluids in body to maintain health, Charaka had prescribed eighty four recepies that have alcoholic mixtures. Chanakya had talked about various indigenous liquors like red wine, white wine, kilaka made up of rice and spice, jathi made from flowers consumed by common people. Magandeep Singh is hopeful about Mahua; which he mentions as pre Aryan drink that has survived the test of time and having a prospective future in market.

Apart from book we have gone through journal Indra Munshi Saldanha in her article, 'Drinking and 'Drunkenness': History of Liquor in Colonial India' published in Economic *and Political Weekly, 30*(37), 2323-2331 has written about the British

Liquor policy and its impact on indigenous liquors of Thane district. She gave brief account of the drinking habit amongst the local tribesmen that laboured upon the lands of feudal that were acquired by them through providing liquors to common people. She further referred the Gandhian opposition to alcoholic drinks due to the poor economic status and losing agricultural lands in return of liquors. Due to the movement of banning alcohol also impacted the traditional liquors in India. The stigma of being an immoral act of drinking has become a hurdle in the way of production and consumption of traditional liquors. Mahatma Gandhi had been correct in his approach towards harmful effects of liquors on poor people but on the other hand the religious importance of liquors in tribal life survived till date. Today, traditional herbal liquors like Toddy, Mahua and wines extracted from fruits and grains have been replace by Indian Made Foreign Liquors like Beer, Whisky, Rum etc.

In the special article Alcoholic Beverages in India by Chopra, R. N., Chopra, G. S., & Chopra, published in *The Indian Medical Gazette*, *77*(4), 224–233 has mentioned classification of alcoholic beverages in to fermented and distilled liquors.The authors classified beverages like Toddy as natural products and fermented base drinks from rice, millets etc. They have further mentioned the distilled liquors as spirits made from sugars, mahua, spirits, rice spirits, toddy spirits, fruit spirits, cashew spirits, spirits from cereals and spirits from uncommon ingredients and adulterants. According to them, the ancient Indians have gone beyond the intoxicant qualities of alcohol consumption to its medicinal use that was useful for remedy on various diseases. Goa is a popular destination for the worldwide tourists not only for its exotic beaches but also popular for its home-grown liquor feni. BiulaV.Cruz e Pereira, (Eds.). (2015), *One for the Road: Role of Alcohol in Goan Society* describes the role and tradition of consumption of *Feni* drink in Goan people in daily life and also stated that medicinal benefits to treat illness by drinking *Feni.* According to the post published in travel blog, Feni is an important attraction for tourist that visits Goa. Feni drink has become a major source of income for local residents has there are more than 4000 distilleries producing feni drink. The popularity of feni drink has reached America and it will be available on American beaches very soon. The income

generation through goa feni is a significant example for rest of the country where tourism can be developed with the help of home grown herbal liquors.

Purpose:

The purpose of the research study is to attract attention of government bodies, researchers, tribal community members, scientists, farmers, and policy makers towards the traditional home-grown herbal liquors and their benefits for the sustainable development of tribal communities. The study will undertake the scientific approach towards herbal liquors to find out their medicinal qualities and its impact upon consumers. The study also intends to focus on the development of tourism through opportunities in production and marketising the home-grown herbal liquors of Palghar district.The study will attempt to theorise the savings of earnings of common tribesmen that are spent on costly foreign liquors.

Objectives:

1. To study the process of production of herbal liquor.
2. To study the correlation between tourism and local drink.
3. To compare between the market share of herbal liquor and commercial liquor (Indian Made Foreign Liquor).
4. To analyse the government policy.
5. To study the barriers of production and sale of local herbal liquor.
6. To highlight employability scope through herbal liquor.
7. To study medicinal benefit of herbal liquor.

Hypothesis:

The overall hypothesis of the research is that the herbal liquors of Palghar district are beneficial for sustainable development of tribal communities of Palghar district

Sub Hypothesis:

1) The herbal liquors are beneficial for health
2) The herbal liquors have economic prospects for tribal communities
3) The herbal liquors have commercial value
4) The herbal liquors are helpful for social upliftment

Research Design and Methodology:

A. Research Design:

The study would be taking Qualitative as well as Quantitative research by studying drinking habits and preferences of tribal people of the Palghar district. Collect data regarding expenditure of income of tribal community members on foreign liquors and herbal liquors. Collecting data about the awareness of tribal people of medicinal benefits of herbal liquor. Collect quantitative data like volume of sale of herbal liquor. Collecting data about impact of foreign and illicit liquors on health, income and social status of tribal community members of Palghar district.

B. Data Type:

1. Primary Data: Spot visits, personal interviews, field visit and books on tribal community members.
2. Secondary Data: methodology use for taking information available on Internet, Journals, and books.

3. The research is based on primary and secondary data will be analysed using statistical techniques

C. Research Tools:

1. **Primary Data-**Questionnaire taking through Google Form and printed form and taking interview of farmers, herbal liquor makers, local adivasi people

2. Secondary Data-Published Reports, Journals, Books etc

Importance of the Study:

International Status:-Now days some Indian brands like Cobra, Amrut Distilleries, Beera, Dasmonji etc are attracting the customers worldwide. However the herbal liquors are still out of sight of global customers. By promoting tourism and encouraging herbal liquors may open up new avenues for the local community.

National Status: - Two decades ago, people used to prefer the home-grown liquors across India. Due to downfall in the production of herbal liquor and day by day narrowing area of forest, it has been difficult to maintain the demand and supply ratio. Due to abundance of foreign liquor people have started preferring them. At the national level there is a considerable scope for the herbal liquor but there is a state of neglect on the part of governments and scientists. The proposed research intends to attract attention of authorities at national level to form an inclusive policy for acceptance and growth of herbal liquors.

Regional Status: - There are variety of herbal liquors produced and consumed by many tribal communities of the coastal regions of India. In Kokan region, Tadi, Madi,

Mahua, Feni, Chikoo Wine etc. are the home-grown herbal liquors produced by tribal community members. However the scale of production is so low that it does not even reach the local markets. There is a great scope for commercial activities involving farmers, traders and manufacturers that may create income for all.

Scope:

The proposed research is an interdisciplinary study as it includes social, economic and health issues of the residents of Palghar district; especially of the tribal community members. The research study will attempt to understand the social and health concerns like malnutrition and deteriorating health index of tribals due to illicit alcoholic drinks as well as low economic condition due to consumption of costly foreign liquors. The medicinal properties of the herbal liquors associates the study with the medical sciences and the core issue of the research is the commercial value of the herbal liquors through which entrepreneurship development of the tribal area is possible. It will also concentrate on the development of tourism of the area through marketing and promotion of the herbal liquors. The overall scope of the research study inculcates various areas for the sustainable development of the Palghar district.

Limitation of Study:

The research will be limited to the indigenous herbal liquors made by the various community members of Palghar district only. There are variety of herbal liquors extracted from fruits by the residents of Konkan region traditionally which will not be included in the proposed research. The research will be focussing on the home-grown herbal liquors locally prepared by the community members and will not consider the factory made liquors.

Chapter Scheme:

1. **Introduction:** A brief summary of geographical, political and demographical information of Palghar will be provided. The culture, social and economic characteristics of tribal communities will be provided. The objectives, hypothesis and tentative chapter scheme of the thesis will be discussed.

2. **Tribal Socio-Cultural Formations and Herbal Liquors:** This chapter will include the social, cultural, religious, economic and financial aspects of tribal communities of Palghar district. The focus of the chapter will also be on the relationship between the socio-economic, cultural formations and herbal liquors.

3. **Herbal Liquors: Characteristics and importance-** This chapter will discuss the process of making herbal liquors in detail. The chapter will highlight the important characteristics of herbal liquors and will also talk about its importance in overall life of tribal communities of Palghar district.

4. **Herbal Liquors and Health Issues**: In this chapter a comparative study of impact of herbal and other liquors on the health of tribal community members will be included. The chapter will attempt to prove the hypothesis that herbal liquors are beneficial for health.

5. **Herbal Liquors and Financial Prospects:** This chapter will be talking about the financial benefits of production and sale of herbal liquors of Palghar district. It will also discuss entrepreneurship development and opportunities in tourism through herbal liquors. The chapter will attempt to prove the hypothesis that herbal liquors have economic prospects and commercial value for the upliftment of tribal communities of Palghar distrct.

6. **Sustainable Development of Tribal Communities:** This chapter will discuss the impact of herbal liquors on the overall development of tribal communities. It will also conclude the thesis.

Year Wise Plan of Work and Targets to be Achieved:

Year 1-Data collection through field visits, Questionnaire, Interviews, Spot Visits and Drafting Reports of Data Collection. First Two Chapters will be completed.

Year 2- Data Collection through field visits, Literature from Libraries and Collection of e-Resources. Chapter Three and Four will be completed.

Year 3-Chapter Five and Six will be completed. Thesis will be submitted to University for further procedures.

Expected Outcome:-

This research study will provide the necessary exposure to the qualities of herbal liquor which subsequently will be helpful in creating awareness and acceptability among the alcohol consumers. The study will be successful in providing information regarding medicinal qualities of herbal liquor that will be protecting consumers from the hazardous effects of illicit and foreign liquors. The study will provide a platform to the tribal farmers and liquor manufacturers to raise income and employability through sales and marketing of herbal liquors.

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